

The EA Process

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires the Commission to take into account the environmental impacts that could result from an action whenever it considers the issuance of a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity. NEPA also requires us to discover and address concerns the public may have about proposals. We call this "scoping". The main goal of the scoping process is to focus the analysis in the EA on the important environmental issues. By this Notice of Intent, the Commission requests public comments on the scope of the issues it will address in the EA. All comments received are considered during the preparation of the EA. State and local government representatives are encouraged to notify their constituents of this proposed action and encourage them to comment on their areas of concern.

The EA will discuss impacts that could occur as a result of the construction and operation of the proposed project under the general headings:

- Geology and soils
- Water resources, fisheries, and wetlands
- Vegetation and wildlife
- Endangered and threatened species
- Public safety
- Land use
- Cultural resources
- Air quality and noise
- Hazardous waste

We will also evaluate possible alternatives to the proposed project or portions of the project, and make recommendations on how to lessen or avoid impacts on the various resource areas.

Our independent analysis of the issues will be in the EA. Depending on the comments received during the scoping process, the EA may be published and mailed to Federal, state, and local agencies, public interest groups, interested individuals, affected landowners, newspapers, libraries, and the Commission's official service list for this proceeding. A comment period will be allotted for review if the EA is published. We will consider all comments on the EA before we recommend that the Commission approve or not approve the project.

Currently Identified Environmental Issues

We have already identified several issues that we think deserve attention based on a preliminary review of the proposed facilities and the environmental information provided by

Great Lakes. This preliminary list of issues may be changed based on your comments and our analysis.

- Effect on three federally listed endangered or threatened species, Bald eagle, Piping plover, and Timber wolf, and state special concern species.
- Eleven perennial waterbodies would be crossed and three of them are coldwater fisheries (two are trout stocking fisheries).
- Four waterbodies would be crossed that are over 100 feet wide (South Branch Two Rivers, Mississippi River, Schoolcraft River, and Nemadji River).
- Effect on Mississippi Headwaters State Forest land.
- Effect on residences that are potentially within 50 feet of the proposed construction work area.
- Several prehistoric and historic archaeological sites may be affected by the project (only 30 percent of the cultural resources surveys have been completed to date).

Public Participation

- You can make a difference by sending a letter addressing your specific comments or concerns about the project. You should focus on the potential environmental effects of the proposal, alternatives to the proposal (including alternative routes), and measures to avoid or lessen environmental impact. The more specific your comments, the more useful they will be. Please follow the instructions below to ensure that your comments are received and properly recorded:

- Address your letter to: Lois Cashell, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First St., N.E., Washington, DC 20426.
- Reference Docket No. CP96-647-000.
- Mail your comments so that they will be received in Washington, DC on or before March 3, 1997.

If you wish to receive a copy of the EA, please write to the Secretary of the Commission at the address on page 4 of this notice.

Becoming an Intervenor

In addition to involvement in the EA scoping process, you may want to become an official party to the proceeding or become an "intervenor". Among other things, intervenors have the right to receive copies of case-related Commission documents and filings by other intervenors. Likewise, each intervenor must provide copies of its filings to all other parties. If you want to become an intervenor you must file a motion to intervene according to Rule 214 of the Commission's Rules of

Practice and Procedure (18 CFR 385.214) (see appendix 2).

The date for filing timely motions to intervene in this proceeding has passed. Therefore, parties now seeking to file late interventions must show good cause, as required by § 385.214(b)(3), why this time limitation should be waived. Environmental issues have been viewed as good cause for late intervention.

You do not need intervenor status to have your scoping comments considered.

Lois D. Cashell,

Secretary.

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[Docket Nos. CP96-16-000 and CP96-16-001]

Transcontinental Gas Pipeline Corporation; Notice of Meeting

January 30, 1997.

On February 6, 1997, Office of Pipeline Regulation Staff will meet with representatives of Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line Corporation (Transco) to discuss pre-filing matters for a compliance filing on compressor station architectural design required by Commission Order issued December 2, 1996 in Docket No. CP96-16-000 and 001. Transco requested this pre-filing meeting by letter filed January 29, 1997 in the subject docket.

The meeting will be at 10:00 AM at the Commission's headquarters, 888 First Street NE, Washington, DC.

Kevin P. Madden,

Director, Office of Pipeline Regulation.

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Southwestern Power Administration

Transmission Rate Design Development

AGENCY: Southwestern Power Administration, DOE.

ACTION: Notice canceling a planned technical conference.

SUMMARY: The Administrator, Southwestern Power Administration (Southwestern) will *not* conduct the Technical Conference that was anticipated to be convened as noted in the Federal Register (61 FR 53732) on October 15, 1996.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Forrest E. Reeves, Assistant Administrator, Office of Corporate Operations, Southwestern Power Administration, U.S. Department of